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SUBJECT: SECURITY, ACCESS CONTINUE TO LIMIT AID EFFORTS AND RETURNS
IN NORTH DARFUR

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) Health and sanitation are stable in the old North Darfur Zam Zam internally displaced persons (IDP) camp. However, the new camp has poor sanitation and high rates of child malnutrition. Security in North Darfur remains tenuous. UNAMID does no night patrols, and only one or two patrols outside some camps during the day. Sexual and gender-based violence continue outside the camps. Since March, there have been three kidnappings of expatriate assistance workers in Darfur. (Ref C) NGO movements are restricted by a new requirement that humanitarian agencies obtain the approval of Military Intelligence, a process which requires three government stamps. Until the issue of security is adequately addressed by the GNU, insecurity in North Darfur will limit both humanitarian efforts and the return of IDPs to their homes. End Summary

ZAM ZAM: Health, Nutrition Stable in Old Camp

¶2. (U) On July 30, USAID/OFDA traveled with implementing partner Relief International (RI) to Zam Zam IDP camp, located approximately 17 km outside of El Fasher town. RI has been operating in the area for more than five years and staffs two of the four Zam Zam-area clinics. The team first visited RI's clinic in the old section of Zam Zam camp, where RI maintains several brick buildings, including a maternal health examination room, a delivery room, and a post-partum recovery room. In addition, RI is currently constructing a four-room brick building that will house an operating room for simple procedures, a laboratory, and separate examination rooms for men and women. According to RI, the clinic sees between 1,500 and 1,800 individuals during a week (in farming season) and 2,000 to 2,500 patients a week during the rest of the year. In total, RI's patient load has decreased since 2008, thanks to the three other clinics serving the more than 110,000 individuals (IDPs and local residents) in the Zam Zam area.

¶3. (U) RI staff regularly travel through the old section of Zam Zam camp to provide vaccination coverage and malnutrition screening for camp residents. In June, RI conducted a vaccination campaign for

diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, and polio. The organization's nutrition center provides weekly rations (distributed three days per week) to 490 supplementary feeding patients as well as 80 outpatients. According to RI nutrition staff, malnutrition has decreased in the old section of Zam Zam camp in 2009, although malnutrition has risen sharply in the new section of the camp. Despite typical seasonal increases in acute respiratory infections and diarrhea, health staff reported a stable overall health situation in the old section of Zam Zam camp.

Malnutrition Rife in Zam Zam New Camp

¶4. (U) The situation in the new section of Zam Zam camp was starkly different from its older neighbor. Following the Sudanese government bombings in Muhajeria, South Darfur, in January and February 2009, more than 30,000 individuals arrived at Zam Zam camp, swelling the camp's population to more than 100,000 individuals. (Note: As of July 28, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) confirmed nearly 24,000 new arrivals at the camp between January 26 and March 26. A second verification campaign for later arrivals was scheduled to begin during the week of August 1. End Note) Currently, the new section of the camp is overcrowded with tightly spaced ad-hoc shelters and no coordinated plan, resulting in poor sanitation and high rates of diarrheal diseases.

¶5. (U) RI began providing health services to the new area in April 2009, and two large tents house both emergency medical and nutrition programs. Unlike the RI clinic at the other end of the camp, all medical procedures occur in one of the two open tents, and

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supplementary food stocks are stored adjacent to vaccination supplies and patient beds. According to RI, the clinic sees between 250 and 300 patients per day, six days per week. The majority of the patients are children suffering from malnutrition and the number continues to increase. RI nutrition staff reported that the new section of the camp has a very high child mortality rate, because families typically do not bring malnourished children to the clinic until they are near death and beyond help from health providers. With the help of RI nutrition staff, the organization currently conducts limited supplementary feeding activities at the clinic, but lacks adequate facilities and funding to enlarge the operation. In addition, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has provided support to RI and the UN World Food Program (WFP) provided an initial food distribution to camp residents.

New Camp Sanitation Poor

¶6. (U) Despite efforts by the North Darfur State Ministry of Health and Government of National Unity (GNU) Office of Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES), the new section of Zam Zam camp suffers from high pollution and very poor sanitation with houses adjacent to latrines. As a result of poor sanitation, health workers reported concern at the significant and increasing number of diarrhea patients. As of August 1, 2009, the USG through USAID/OFDA obligated funds to construct a brick clinic in the new section of Zam Zam.

¶7. (U) Despite camp overcrowding, local farmers prohibit the current camp from expanding onto additional farmland, and the GNU refuses to acknowledge that the camp residents are IDPs, thus restricting the delivery of additional assistance. Facing the current challenges, RI staff reported good overall communication with IDPs, highlighting that community leaders in both sections of Zam Zam hold weekly meetings with humanitarian agencies to discuss ongoing needs and concerns.

Gender-Based Violence Continues Outside Camp

¶8. (SBU) When asked directly, RI staff noted that sexual and

gender-based violence (SGBV) still occurs outside the camp, although incidents of perpetrators raping women inside the camp have decreased since additional populations arrived. RI staff noted that the clinic treats women for injuries, and staff support the victim if she wishes to report the incident. Many women do not report rape in part because government, local security officials and other community members sometimes target and harass women following such reporting. According to RI staff, Zam Zam camp had 25 incidents of rape between December 2007 and August 2008; however, no newer information was available. (Note: The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) also reported continued problems of SGBV, including a late July incident outside Zam Zam camp when attackers killed a mother and injured her daughter as the woman tried to prevent the men from raping her child. End Note)

Rural North Darfur Security Tenuous

¶ 9. (U) Humanitarian staff described the security situation in El Fasher town as stable. However, the security situation in rural areas of North Darfur remains tenuous, particularly Kutum, Kebkabiya, and Seraf Umra towns. According to OCHA, "Although some IDPs leave for seasonal and agricultural returns, the majority return to camps for safety and security. Voluntary returns will happen when security exists." In addition, RI staff noted that Zam Zam IDPs will not return to South Darfur because of concerns about the lack of security.

¶ 10. (SBU) UNAMID does not conduct night patrols around camps and

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conducts a maximum of two patrols a day at one camp and no patrols at other camps, according to NGOs and UN agencies. In addition, UNAMID does not conduct patrols to protect women traveling outside the camp to collect firewood. According to OCHA, IDPs perceive that UNAMID has a limited capacity, and humanitarian staff believe that UNAMID is not fully using its Chapter 7 mandate to protect civilians by force if necessary. OCHA noted that the North Darfur humanitarian community wants the operation to have "more teeth" and do more to protect and engage local populations.

¶ 11. (U) According to OCHA, North Darfur populations, particularly rural groups, continue to suffer. The USG is funding USAID/OFDA's Partner Aid International (PAI), which serves approximately 147,000 individuals in North Darfur rural areas, mainly through low visibility projects run by local staff and with a minimal international staff presence. According to OCHA, current insecurity and suspension of some programs has also created a corridor of population whose needs remain unserved by UN and international organizations. One example is the area of Kebkabiya where 100,000 IDPs reside. As a result of insecurity, international organizations have departed the town, leaving national organizations that have minimal capacity and staff. Two national NGOs currently work in Kebkabiya, an area that Oxfam/Great Britain had served since 1985 until the organization's March 2009 expulsion.

Expulsions, Kidnapping Limit Expat Staff

¶ 12. (U) According to USAID/OFDA implementing partner PAI, on October 30, 2008, deep field locations and programs in North Darfur had 43 international staff present. As of July 16, 2009, there were only two expatriate staff in all North Darfur deep field locations, with a total of eight reportedly on the ground on August 6. This significant change results from the NGO expulsions, ongoing insecurity, and three kidnapping episodes involving humanitarian staff.

¶ 13. (SBU) According to PAI, NGOs are reluctant to expand programming until local and international officials identify and take action against the perpetrators of the three hostage incidents since March 2009. Authorities have not yet arrested any kidnappers and humanitarian staff remain concerned for their safety. Two members of USAID/OFDA implementing partner GOAL's staff, an Irish and

Ugandan national, have been held hostage for more than a month as representatives from their governments and the GNU negotiate with the kidnappers.

New Decree Restricts Travel

¶14. (SBU) NGO staff said that the most recent federal-level Ministerial Decree has complicated travel restrictions on humanitarian organizations. The travel notification requires another level of clearance and has restricted NGO movement by including the approval of Military Intelligence before permitting an NGO to travel to program sites outside El Fasher. (NOTE: Travel notifications require three government stamps, versus the old travel permit that required only two stamps. END NOTE) PAI staff expressed appreciation for Dr. Ghazi Salahuddin's cooperation and ongoing work with humanitarian actors. However, local officials still do not receive or implement federal-level messages to reduce restrictions on humanitarian work. For example, various local officials continue to request travel permits for NGO supplies which federal-level officials have indicated are unnecessary.

COMMENT

¶15. (U) Until the issue of security is further addressed by the GNU, insecurity in North Darfur will limit both humanitarian efforts and

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the return of IDPs to their homes.

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